

DATELINE: 103 WASHINGTON, D.C.
ALINA ZERANSKI

AUGUST 11, 1976

BRIDGE TO THE SILENT WORLD
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES -- BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON A VISIT TO A UNIQUE INSTITUTION FOR TRAINING PEOPLE TO HELP HANDICAPPED HUMAN BEINGS COMMUNICATE WITH THE EXTERNAL WORLD.

NARR: JUDY CAME BACK TO SCHOOL REJOICING. ACCUSED OF SHOPLIFTING, SHE HAD BEEN TAKEN TO COURT. THERE AT LAST, SHE WAS ABLE TO EXPLAIN THE MISUNDERSTANDING AND HER CASE WAS DISMISSED. JUDGEMENT FOR JUDY WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE AN INTERPRETER WAS CALLED IN AND TRANSLATED THE DEAF GIRL'S LANGUAGE INTO WORDS.

IN THE LAST DECADE, THIRTY-SEVEN STATES OF AMERICA HAVE PASSED LEGISLATION GIVING DEAF PERSONS THE RIGHT TO AN INTERPRETER, AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE, FOR ANY COURT OR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING. SIX INSTITUTIONS ARE TRAINING SUCH INTERPRETERS. THE MOST ACTIVE IS GALLAUDET COLLEGE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., THE ONLY LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE FOR DEAF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.

IT IS A PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT CORPORATION, ESTABLISHED BY A PHILANTHROPIST WHO DONATED LOVELY GROUNDS AND A SPACIOUS BUILDING. IT WAS NAMED AFTER THOMAS GALLAUDET, THE FOUNDER OF THE FIRST SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF IN THE U-S. OUTSIDE OF

NARR: REGULAR LIBERAL ARTS SUBJECTS, IT OFFERS SPECIAL COURSES
(CONT) FOR BOTH DEAF AND HEARING PEOPLE, LIKE EDUCATION FOR THE
DEAF, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, COUNSELING, AUDIOLOGY, AND
SIGN LANGUAGE.

DR. LOTTIE RIEKEHOF, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERPRETER TRAINING
PROGRAM WHICH IS SPONSORED IN PART BY GOVERNMENT GRANTS,
FILLS IN SOME OF THE BACKGROUND.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- RIEKEHOF:

"WE HAVE BEEN HERE SINCE AT LEAST 1864. ALL THE DIPLOMAS OF
THE STUDENTS ARE SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.
PRESIDENT LINCOLN SIGNED THE CHARTER OF THIS COLLEGE. AT
THE PRESENT TIME, WE HAVE OVER A THOUSAND STUDENTS AT
GALLAUDET, AND WE HAVE ALL LEVELS OF TRAINING. IN FACT ON
THIS CAMPUS, WE HAVE PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND AN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL, A MODEL SECONDARY SCHOOL, COLLEGE LEVEL, MASTER'S
DEGREE AND DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMS."

NARR: FOR MANY YEARS, DEAF PEOPLE HAD TO RELY UPON THEIR CHILDREN
TO HELP THEM COMMUNICATE WITH NEIGHBORS OR IN STORES. THEY
HAD TO TAKE THEM TO DOCTORS' OFFICES OR TO LAWYERS. VERY
OFTEN THE CHILDREN WERE TOO YOUNG FOR THE TASK, BUT STILL
SOME OF THESE YOUNG INTERPRETERS, AFTER BECOMING ADULTS, KEPT
ON HELPING DEAF PEOPLE. TODAY, HOWEVER MANY INTERPRETERS
ARE TRAINED WHO HAVE HAD NO DEAFNESS IN THEIR FAMILIES.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- RIEKEHOF:

"DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT INCREASE
OF INTEREST IN INTERPRETING FOR DEAF PEOPLE. AS INTERPRETERS
BECAME AVAILABLE, DEAF PEOPLE CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE MAIN
STREAM OF THE SOCIETY. THEY CAN ATTEND PLAYS, THEY CAN GO
TO CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES AND DO EVERYTHING THAT
HEARING PEOPLE CAN DO AND UNDERSTAND AND ENJOY IT BECAUSE
INTERPRETERS ARE ABLE TO BRING ALL THE MATERIAL TO THEM BY
MEANS OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE. WE OFFER SIGN LANGUAGE COURSES
TO BEGINNER STUDENTS AND ON UP TO AN ADVANCED LEVEL. THEN,
IF PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING INTERPRETERS, WE BEGIN
WITH AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN INTERPRETING FOR DEAF PEOPLE

TAPE: AND CONTINUE ON THROUGH, FROM ONE COURSE TO ANOTHER, UNTIL
(CONT) THEY ATTAIN A LEVEL WHERE THEY CAN BE CERTIFIED. IN THE
UNITED STATES WE HAVE A CERTIFYING AGENCY WHICH IS CALLED
THE NATIONAL REGISTRY OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF. THERE
IS A STRICT EXAMINATION, IF THEY PASS THIS EXAMINATION, THEY
BECOME CERTIFIED AND RECOGNIZED AS PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETERS."

NARR: THE NATIONAL REGISTRY HAS 2000 MEMBERS, BUT ONLY 600 ARE
CERTIFIED INTERPRETERS. IT IS NOT EASY TO QUALIFY. IT
TAKES ABOUT A YEAR TO ACQUIRE A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF SIGN
LANGUAGE, AND ONE OR TWO MORE TO ACHIEVE A PROFESSIONAL
STANDARD. OUTSIDE OF MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR DEAF PEOPLE TO
PARTICIPATE IN ENTERTAINMENT, ATTEND REGULAR SCHOOLS AND
SOCIALIZE, INTERPRETERS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN REAL
ESTATE TRANSACTIONS, IN HOSPITALS OR IN COURT CASES. LEGAL

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INTERPRETING REQUIRES SPECIAL ADDITIONAL TRAINING. THERE
ARE NOW SOME FULL TIME INTERPRETING POSITIONS, BUT MOST
INTERPRETERS DO THIS IN THEIR SPARE TIME, OR COMBINE MANY
SMALL JOBS INTO A FREE LANCE CAREER. IT IS NOT A
PROFITABLE PROFESSION, BUT SERVES A USEFUL PURPOSE. DR.
RIEKEHOF BECAME INTERESTED IN THAT FIELD BY CHANCE WHEN SHE
TRIED TO HELP A DEAF WOMAN UNDERSTAND A SERMON IN CHURCH.
THEY BECAME FRIENDS AND THIS WAS HER INCENTIVE TO STUDY
SIGN LANGUAGE. AFTER ASSOCIATING WITH MANY DEAF PEOPLE,
LOTTIE RIEKEHOF BECAME FLUENT ENOUGH TO TEACH OTHERS AND
SHE EARNED HER DOCTORATE IN DEAFNESS RESEARCH AND TRAINING.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- RIEKEHOF:

"INTERPRETING OFTEN IS VERY REWARDING BECAUSE FROM TIME TO
TIME THERE ARE THOSE SPECIAL OCCASIONS, SUCH AS ONE WHICH I
HAD ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO WHEN I WAS INVITED TO INTERPRET IN
PRESIDENT FORD'S OFFICE FOR TWO YOUNG WOMEN WHO HAD BEEN
INVITED TO SEE HIM. ONE WAS THE PRESENT MISS DEAF AMERICA
AND THE OTHER WAS THE FORMER MISS DEAF AMERICA. THE
GIRLS PRESENTED HIM WITH A LAPEL PIN WITH THE HAND FORMATION

TAPE: REPRESENTING THE LETTERS WHICH SAY -- I LOVE YOU. I HAVE
(CONT) ALSO INTERPRETED FOR VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER WHEN HE CAME
ON OUR CAMPUS AND SPOKE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF
DEAF PEOPLE. I ALSO INTERPRETED WHEN MRS. NIXON WAS ON OUR
CAMPUS FOR A DEDICATION OF THE GROUND FOR THE MODEL
SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF."

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NARR: MANY INSTITUTIONS FOR THE DEAF STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF
LEARNING LIP READING AND TALKING, BUT THE TESTS SHOW THAT
EVEN THE MOST SKILLED PERSONS CAN LIP READ ONLY ABOUT FORTY
PERCENT OF WHAT IS SAID, AND ONLY A FEW DEAF INDIVIDUALS
MASTER SPEAKING WELL ENOUGH TO BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD. THE
TEACHING AT GALLAUDET COLLEGE REPRESENTS THE BELIEF THAT
SIGN LANGUAGE IS THE BEST WAY TO BREAK THE BARRIER OF
ISOLATION SO PAINFUL FOR PEOPLE AFFLICTED WITH DEAFNESS.

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